New York State
Department of Health
AIDS Institute
Office of Planning and Community Affairs, and
Division of HIV and Hepatitis Health Care
Bureau of Hepatitis Health Care and Epidemiology
And
Health Research Inc.

Request for Applications
RFA #20309
Internal RFA #23-0001

Grants Gateway #s: Component A - DOH01-EEUCMA-2024
Component B - DOH01-EEUCMB-2024

Ending the HIV and Hepatitis C Epidemics Utilizing Community Mobilization

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Questions below were received by the deadline announced in the RFA. NYSDOH is not responsible for any errors or misinterpretation of any questions received.

The responses to questions included herein are the official responses by the State to questions posted by potential bidders and are hereby incorporated into the RFA #**20309**. In the event of any conflict between the RFA and these responses, the requirements or information contained in these responses will prevail.

Grants Gateway, Application Submission & Application Download

Question 1: How do I apply?

Answer 1: Please refer to Section IV. Administrative Requirements, E. How to File an Application on pages 15-17 of the RFA.

Reference materials and videos are available for Grantees applying to funding opportunities on the NYS Grants Gateway. Please visit the Grants Management website at the following web address: https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/ and select the "Apply for a Grant" from the Apply & Manage menu. There is also a more detailed "Grants Gateway: Vendor User Guide" available in the documents section under Training & Guidance; for Grant Applicants on this page as well. Training webinars are also provided by the Grants Gateway Team. Dates and times for webinar instruction can be located at the following web address: https://grantsmanagement.ny.gov/live-webinars.

To apply for this opportunity (that is, to submit an Application):

1. Log into the Grants Gateway as either a "Grantee" or "Grantee Contract Signatory".
2. On the Grants Gateway home page, click the "View Opportunities" button".
3. Use the search fields to locate an opportunity; search by State agency (NYSDOH) or enter the Grant Opportunity name, *Ending the HIV and Hepatitis C Epidemics Utilizing Community Mobilization.*

4. Click on "Search" button to initiate the search.
5. Click on the name of the Grant Opportunity from the search results grid and then select the "APPLY FOR GRANT OPPORTUNITY" button located bottom left of the Main page of the Grant Opportunity.

For additional information, please refer to the RFA Section IV., Administrative Requirements, E. How to File an Application.

Question 2: What if I try to submit my application and it is past the due date/time of the RFA?

Answer 2: Please refer to Section IV. Administrative Requirements, E. How to File an Application on pages 15-17 of the RFA.

Late applications will not be accepted. Applications must be submitted online via the Grants Gateway by the date and time posted on the Cover Page of this RFA under the heading "Key Dates". An applicant will not have the option to submit an application in the Grants Gateway once the due date/time has passed.

Once the Application is complete, a prospective Applicant is **strongly encouraged** to submit their Application at least **48 hours prior to the** Application's due date and time specified on the Cover Page of the RFA. This will allow sufficient opportunity for the Applicant to obtain assistance and take corrective action should there be a technical issue with the submission process. **Failure to leave adequate time to address issues identified during this process may jeopardize an Applicant's ability to submit their Application.**

Question 3: How do I determine if my agency is pre-qualified through the Grants Gateway?

Answer 3: Please refer to Section IV. Administrative Requirements, L. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits on pages 22-23 of the RFA.

To be registered and prequalified through the Grants Gateway, an organization must have submitted a registration form, identified a grantee delegated administrator, entered required documents into the document vault, and submitted the document vault for review. Please note the documents in the vault must be submitted with sufficient time to be reviewed and approved. Waiting until the last minute is not advised. Your organization's status can be viewed by accessing your document vault and observing the current status noted in the details panel at the top of your document vault main menu. The status can also be obtained by running the "State Prequalification Application Status Report" under the Management Screens section of your vault. Specific questions about the prequalification process should be referred to your primary New York State agency representative or to the Grants Gateway Team at grantsgateway@its.ny.gov.

Question 4: Can an agency apply if they are not prequalified through the Grants Gateway?

Answer 4: Please refer to Section IV. Administrative Requirements, L. Vendor Prequalification for Not-for-Profits on pages 22-23 of the RFA.

No, Applicants must be prequalified (if not exempt) by the date and time applications are due. Each not-for-profit Applicant subject to prequalification is required to prequalify prior to submitting its Application in the Grants Gateway.

For more information visit: Get Prequalified | Grants Management (ny.gov)

Question 5: What does the asterisk * mean in the Grants Gateway on-line application?

Answer 5: The asterisk* alerts applicants that a response is mandatory. Applicants will not be allowed to submit their application without completing all mandatory questions and uploading all mandatory attachments.

Application Format

Question 6: I have a question about what I should include as the Project Title in the Program Specific Questions section on the Grants Gateway online application. Should the Project Title be listed as the actual name of the RFA?

Answer 6: Yes, the Project Title should be listed as the actual name of the RFA. Applicants should enter *"Ending the HIV and Hepatitis C Epidemics Utilizing Community Mobilization"*.

Question 7: Are there page limits which apply to different sections of the application?

Answer 7: Narrative sections of the application no longer contain page limits. Instead, the New York State Grants Gateway online application provides character limits. When applicants are typing a response to the Program Specific Question, the number of characters allowed as a response is shown. As applicants type their response, the number of characters (including spaces) used will be displayed up to the maximum allowed.

Question 8: In some questions, it specifically states that the number of characters allowed includes spaces. In other questions it does not specify that the number of characters includes spaces. For questions where this is not specified, does the character limit include spaces?

Answer 8: Each text box allows a certain character limit. This character limit in all cases is inclusive of spaces. As applicants enter their response to each Program Specific Question, the number of characters (including spaces) used will be displayed along with the maximum number of characters allowed (e.g., 324 of 1,000).

Question 9: Can we write our application in Word and cut and paste it into the grant application form on the Grants Gateway?

Answer 9: Yes, it is possible to prepare your application in Word and cut and paste it into the online Grants Gateway system. However, it would be especially important to note the character limits in advance of attempting to cut and paste written material into the Grants Gateway. It is also important to make sure the correct text is entered for the intended question. If a response is not pasted into the text box for the intended answer, it may impact the reviewer's scoring of that response. **It is also important to remember to save your application data frequently as you enter it into the Grants Gateway. The system automatically times out after 3 minutes of inactivity, and any unsaved work will be lost.**

Question 10: How do I complete the Work Plan Summary in Grants Gateway?

Answer 10: For the Grants Gateway **Work Plan Project Summary**, applicants are instructed to insert the Project Summary as it is listed on the first page of the Work Plan. In the Grants Gateway **Work Plan Organizational Capacity** section, applicants are instructed to list this as "not applicable."

Any additional Project Summary or Organizational Capacity information entered in these areas will not be considered or scored by the application reviewers.

Question 11: When will announcement of grant awardees be made?

Answer 11: The estimated award announcement date is September 1, 2023.

Question 12: When do you anticipate that the contract will begin for the project funded under the RFA?

Answer 12: Please refer to Section IV. Administrative Requirements, G. Term of Contract on page 18 of the RFA.

It is anticipated contracts will have a start date of December 1, 2023.

Question 13: In the RFA, Section "I" Page 21, M/WBE it states, "By submitting an Application, each Applicant and potential Grantee agrees to complete an **M/WBE Utilization plan** as directed in **Attachment 6** of this RFA". Kindly clarify whether the M/WBE form in Attachment 6 is incorporated as a reference OR must be completed and submitted with the RFA application in order for the application to be considered complete.

Answer 13: Attachment 6 must be completed and submitted with the RFA application for the application to be considered complete. Instructions for completing Attachment 6 can be found on the first page of the Attachment.

Question 14: Should the M/WBE Utilization Plan be reflective of just the first-year budget or all five years? Will there be a possibility of applying for a waiver from the MBE and WBE requirements? Is this form required?

Answer 14: The M/WBE Utilization plan should be based on the life of the contract, which is five years. Eligible M/WBE expenditures include any subcontracted labor or services, equipment, materials, or any combined purchase of the foregoing under a contract awarded from this solicitation. Please refer to the instructions on Attachment 6, M/WBE Utilization Plan - Guide to New York State DOH M/WBE RFA NFP Required Forms, Form #2: M/WBE Utilization Waiver Request for instructions on applying for a waiver. If the M/WBE Utilization Plan is incomplete, and the applicant is selected for funding, the resulting award will be held pending completion of the required documentation. All Applicants must complete Form #4 (M/WBE Staffing Plan) and Form #5 (EEO and M/WBE Policy Statement) in addition to the forms noted above.

Question 15: Are letters of support or linkage agreements required to be submitted for this grant?

Answer 15: Please refer to Section VI. Attachments on page 34 of the RFA for a list of the required attachments.

Letters of support or linkage agreements are not required for this RFA and will not be considered or scored by reviewers of this RFA.

Program

Component A

Question 16: How frequent are the data/insights sharing needed?

Answer 16: As described in Attachment 3. Work Plan – Component A on pages 36-41 of the RFA, funded applicants will be expected to review and discuss local and/or regional HCV epidemiology data annually at a coalition meeting; conduct, analyze and summarize a regional gaps analysis by end of year 2; and report on program activities in a narrative report monthly.

Question 17: Are there estimated volumes or minimums for testing? Is the RFA expectation to do a community-based testing and education event in each region or one event for all of NYS?

Answer 17: As outlined in Section III.A. Program Model Description on page 8 of the RFA, funded applicants for Component A are expected to strengthen the community-level response to HCV within their awarded region by engaging and supporting community collaborators to increase regional education and awareness of HCV; raise public support to advance HCV elimination; establish regional HCV elimination coalitions; coordinate regional community action planning to advance the NYS HCV elimination plan; and educate government policy makers.

Funded applicants are not required to conduct community-based testing. However, testing would be an allowable activity.

As outlined in Section III.B. Requirements for the Program on pages 9-10 of the RFA, funded applicants under Component A are expected to conduct community education and HCV awareness activities to help engage and mobilize the community to address HCV. This includes planning and hosting at least one community wide HCV event each year within their funded region to promote HCV testing, linkage to care and treatment.

Funded applicants are also expected to conduct activities to educate government policy makers. This includes preparing coalitions members to educate policy makers; assisting with the coordination of and participating in an annual HCV Legislative Education Day in Albany, NY.

Question 18: Will testing be point-of-care or at-home testing?

Answer 18: Direct client services, including HCV testing, are not the focus of this RFA. As outlined Section III.A. Program Model Description on pages 8-9 of the RFA and in Attachment 3: Community Planning and Coalition Building for Hepatitis C Elimination Work Plan, funding through this RFA is intended to engage community partners to: 1) Increase community-level hepatitis C awareness and knowledge; 2) Mobilize community support for HCV elimination; 3) establish and maintain regional HCV elimination coalitions; 4) Identify and address regional gaps, needs and inequities though coordinated regional community action planning; and 5) educate government policy makers.

Question 19: As part of the community education & HCV awareness, is there an expected marketing outreach campaign and if so, is there a set budget amount or specific tactics that should be utilized?

Answer 19: As outlined in Section III.B. Requirements for the Program on page 9 of the RFA, funded applicants for Component A are expected to conduct activities that educate the public about HCV, including HIV/HCV coinfection, and promote HCV prevention, testing and treatment, harm reduction and health promotion. Funded applicants are expected to identify and implement strategies for

community education and HCV awareness activities that are feasible, appropriate, and tailored to the specific region for which they were awarded funding. Successful applicants will draw on their experience engaging and collaborating with people with HCV or HIV/HCV lived experience and other populations at risk for HCV and that experience health inequities and/or social injustices. There is no set budget amount recommended, and agencies should propose strategies that are appropriate for their region/ populations served.

Budget

Component A

Question 20: What are the expectations for the number of tests provided based on the budget allocation outlined by region in the RFP? Is there a minimum or guidance on what percent of the budget should be allocated to tests vs. outreach/education vs. annual event?

Answer 20: Direct client services, including HCV testing, are not the focus of this RFA. As outlined Section III.A. Program Model Description on pages 8-9 of the RFA and in Attachment 3: Community Planning and Coalition Building for Hepatitis C Elimination Work Plan, funding through this RFA is intended to engage community partners to: 1) Increase community-level hepatitis C awareness and knowledge; 2) Mobilize community support for HCV elimination; 3) establish and maintain regional HCV elimination coalitions; 4) Identify and address regional gaps, needs and inequities though coordinated regional community action planning; and 5) educate government policy makers.

As outlined in Section III.B. Requirements for the Program on pages 9-10 of the RFA, funded applicants under Component A are expected to conduct activities that educate the public about HCV to help engage and mobilize the community to address HCV. This includes planning and hosting at least one community wide HCV event each year to promote HCV testing, linkage to care and treatment. There is no set budget amount recommended, and agencies should propose strategies that are appropriate for their region/ populations served.

Question 21: Can funds allocated to regions be reallocated based on need (e.g., Manhattan might require more funding than Finger Lakes)?

Answer 21: Please refer to Section I.B. Available Funding on pages 6-7 of the RFA. Funding will be allocated as stated in the chart found on page 6. Annual award amounts for all regions of Component A are $150,000 and will not exceed $150,000. Annual awards for Component B will not exceed $250,000.

If funding remains available after the maximum number of acceptable scoring applications is awarded to each region, HRI/NYSDOH AI reserves the right to exceed the maximum number of awards. Remaining funding will be awarded to the next highest acceptable scoring applicant(s) from any region until the remaining funding is exhausted or awards have been made to all acceptable scoring applicants.

HRI/NYSDOH AI reserves the right to revise the award amounts as necessary due to changes in availability of funding.

HRI/NYSDOH AI reserves the right to shift funding from one Component of the RFA to another Component should there be an insufficient number of fundable applications received in any Component.

Should additional funding become available, the NYSDOH AI and HRI may select an organization from the pool of applicants deemed not funded, due to limited resources. If it is determined that the needed expertise/services are not available among these organizations, the NYSDOH AI and HRI reserve the right to establish additional competitive solicitations.

Component B

Question 22: During the RFA process should existing Ending the Epidemic (ETE) Regional Steering Committees continue to meet?

Answer 22: During the RFA process, existing ETE Regional Steering Committees should continue to meet and work on identified regional priorities. Once the new lead agencies are identified through Component B of this RFA process, existing committees will also continue and be actively involved as the activities outlined in the RFA are implemented.